

**MINUTES OF RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING - THURSDAY, 9
JUNE 2016**

Present:

Councillor Benson (in the Chair)

Councillors

Critchley	Mitchell	Scott	L Taylor
Humphreys	O'Hara	Stansfield	

Mrs Frances McErlane, Co-opted Member

Dr Sam Johnson, Co-opted Member

In Attendance:

Mrs Delyth Curtis, Director of People

Ms Karen Smith, Deputy Director of People (Adult Services)

Mrs Josie Lee, Service Manager, Children's Social Care

Mr Andy Divall, Head of Community Engagement and Equalities

Mr Adam Bowater, Commissioning Manager

Mr Adam Pearson, Infusion Service Manager

Mrs Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager

Councillor Graham Cain, Cabinet Secretary for Resilient Communities

Councillor Amy Cross, Cabinet Member for Health Inequalities and Adult Safeguarding

Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Third Sector Engagement and Development

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest on this occasion.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12 MAY 2016

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 May 2016 were agreed as a true and correct record.

3 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTees

Mrs Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager presented a report to allow the Committee to appoint Dr Sam Johnson and Mrs Frances McErlane as co-opted members to the Committee.

The Committee agreed to appoint Dr Sam Johnson and Mrs Frances McErlane as co-opted members to the Committee.

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4 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Committee noted that there were no applications for public speaking on this occasion.

5 EXECUTIVE AND CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS

The Committee considered the Executive Decisions taken since the last meeting of the Committee and asked a number of questions regarding PH39/2016 'Grass Cutting Prioritisation'. In response, Councillor Cain, Cabinet Secretary advised that a return to a full grass cutting programme might never be possible due to the extensive funding cuts that continued to be required. He added that it had been important to identify priority areas for grass cutting such as cemeteries and the promenade and that a range of options had been considered that might allow further grass cutting to take place but that none had been affordable.

Members also asked a number of questions pertaining to PH43/2016 'Children's Social Care and Early Help' in relation to the additional funding. In response, Councillor Cain advised that he was confident the additional resource would have an impact. Mrs Del Curtis, Director of People added that the number of Looked After Children continued to increase as did the complexity of cases and that the appointment of six additional social workers would alleviate significant pressure on caseloads. She reported that the progress made in implementing the decision was being closely monitored.

In response to a further question regarding the dedicated resource being used to address specific anti-social activity in the town, Councillor Cain advised that the activity referred to was a specific cohort of young people. Mrs Curtis added that there were safeguarding issues to address with the young people involved and that the activity being undertaken with regards to anti-social activity would be extended to siblings and other connected young people. The mapping was being overseen by a dedicated short term team and was being supported by Police Analysts.

6 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the items contained within the Forward Plan, June 2016 – August 2016 within the portfolio of the Cabinet Secretary and requested an update on 'School Place Planning Next Steps' and was advised by Mrs Curtis that a decision had not yet been taken by the Department for Education on the free school bid. She added that the Department for Education had not published a timescale for the decision.

7 SCRUTINY WORKPLAN

The Chairman highlighted the 'Implementation of Recommendations' table and requested that the list of Councillors attending Dementia Awareness training be updated for the next meeting of the Committee. The Committee also noted that the request for further Families In Need performance data to be circulated was outstanding and Mrs Curtis, Director of People agreed to provide the information following the meeting.

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The Committee agreed:

1. To approve the Scrutiny Workplan.
2. To note the 'Implementation of Recommendations' table.
3. To request that the list of Councillors attending Dementia Awareness training be updated.
4. To receive the performance data regarding the 'Families In Need' service following the meeting.

8 CHILDREN'S AND ADULTS SERVICES REPORT

Mrs Del Curtis, Director of People, presented the Children's and Adults Services Report and the Chairman invited questions from the Committee.

The Committee considered the update provided on the Emergency Duty Team and queried the ratio of agency to permanent staff on the Team. In response, Ms Karen Smith, Deputy Director of People (Adults Services) reported that the Team heavily relied on casual staff to fill the rotas around the core of permanent staff. Members welcomed the proposal to submit a final update of the review of the Team to the Committee in July 2016.

In response to questions regarding Head Start delivery and framework, Mrs Curtis advised that the Head Start programme was a pilot programme and would be externally evaluated. She added that the Council would be informed on 15 June 2016 if it had been successful in securing further funding for a substantive programme by the Big Lottery.

The Committee discussed the New Models of Care schemes developed to provide care to people in the community and queried whether the funding for social workers at Moor Park Health Centre would continue. Ms Smith reported that the funding would cease as the Extensive Care Service the positions were providing had not grown as expected. She added that the Enhanced Primary Care approach had demonstrated the need for social workers and that it was important to place social workers in the right areas.

The Committee went on to discuss the projects provided by Better Start and queried the extent to which projects would be provided universally. In response, Mrs Curtis advised that Better Start had been funded based on the provision of projects within the seven identified wards. However, where permitted by the Big Lottery, Better Start was providing universal services and Mrs Curtis would circulate a full list of universal services following the meeting.

Members noted the engagement programmes on offer for young people at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and requested data on the outcomes of the programmes. Mrs Curtis advised that an outcome report had been finalised and she would arrange for it to be circulated.

Concern was expressed by Members of the Committee that Montgomery Academy had not improved as quickly as it might have been hoped, with a recent Ofsted inspection moving the school from Serious Weaknesses to Requires Improvement. In response, Mrs Curtis

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advised that the School Improvement Team monitored and projected improvement across all schools, providing support where appropriate. She added that the Ofsted Inspection Report had been particularly positive around the effectiveness of leadership and management.

Members queried whether the Montgomery Academy inspection outcome was a further indication of an increasing gap between the quality of primary and secondary education in the town and were informed by Mrs Curtis that the Blackpool Challenge Board considered the transition between primary and secondary schools as a priority and was investing in a number of pilot schemes to target transition. She added that a key concern was the number of high achieving children leaving Blackpool to attend secondary schools in Lancashire. In response to further questions, Mrs Curtis advised that the transition pilot projects were in the early stages and impact could not yet be determined.

The Committee considered the recent inspection of effectiveness in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational need and/or disabilities in Bolton and queried what could be learned from the inspection that could be applied in Blackpool. Mrs Curtis reported that the full outcome from the inspection was not available yet, but that the learning would be shared through regional network meetings. She added that Blackpool was viewed as a beacon of good practice, but that weaknesses regarding collection of some data and the required establishment of a Children and Young People's Board had been identified as areas for improvement, which the service was working on in advance of an inspection in Blackpool.

Care at Home was discussed by the Committee and a thematic discussion paper was requested for consideration at a future meeting focussing on the areas causing concern within the sector. In response, Ms Smith advised that a number of key concerns had been raised and had been discussed with providers. She added that progress was being closely monitored and that the Care at Home sector was a key focus for the Blackpool Adults Safeguarding Board. In response to a further question, Ms Smith advised that there was an equal balance in the number of people receiving Care at Home and Residential Care provision.

Members noted the eight care homes 'requiring improvement' and queried the length of time it would take them to improve. Ms Smith advised that the length of time would vary dependent on the issues to be resolved. She reported that all care homes requiring improvement would be expected to provide an action plan for improvement including timescales to the Care Quality Commission.

The number of safeguarding alerts from The Harbour was discussed by the Committee and Members were informed by Ms Smith that work was being undertaken with the Safeguarding Lead at The Harbour to identify the reasons for the alerts. She added that Lancashire Care Foundation Trust was responsible for investigating the alerts and that measures had been put in place to support staff to manage challenges and behaviours in order to provide safe levels of care. Furthermore, all work by the Trust must be undertaken within Blackpool Safeguarding Adults Board multi-agency procedures.

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Mr Adam Bowater, Commissioning Manager was invited by the Chairman to provide a presentation on the Sufficiency Statement, which was a duty on all local authorities to provide placements for Looked After Children.

Mr Bowater highlighted that the number of Looked After Children was increasing and that 10% of all Looked After Children in Blackpool required residential placements, compared to only 2% nationally, highlighting the complexity of cases. He added that the majority of placements were in foster care and that one third of Looked After Children in Blackpool were aged 11 to 15 years, which was consistent with national averages.

Mr Bowater went on to provide an overview of the type and number of placements available to Blackpool highlighting the high average weekly costs of the more specialist placements required. In response to a question, Members were advised that the high cost was due to a combination of the intensive, often therapeutic service required and that demand for placements was higher than supply. Mrs Curtis added that some children in care required bespoke packages of care due to their complex needs.

The Committee was informed by Mr Bowater that Post 16 Leaving Care was an unregulated sector and that 'Staying Put' was a young person's choice to remain with their foster carer after turning 16. In response to a question, Mr Bowater advised that a consultation had been undertaken with children and young people and responses would be included within the final version of the sufficiency statement.

The Committee agreed:

1. To receive a list of universal services being provided by Better Start following the meeting.
2. To receive an outcomes report on the engagement programmes on offer for young people at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training following the meeting.
3. To receive a thematic discussion paper on Care at Home to a future meeting of the Committee.

9 INTRODUCING INFUSION

Mr Adam Pearson, Infusion Service Manager reported that Infusion was an income generating service designed to gather the views and perceptions of local people and stakeholders to inform public service delivery and encourage involvement in the decision making process. In response to questions, Mr Pearson advised that some groups were more difficult to reach than others, but that consultation was undertaken using a variety of methods in order to engage a wide range of people, including face to face and by post.

Mr Pearson reported that the Infusion Service undertook work for a variety of public sector organisations across the north west and had also run a number of consultations in Blackpool including those on Public Space Protection Orders, Library Opening Hours and an Illuminations Visitor Survey, all in 2015.

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The Committee discussed the importance of engaging with the local community and commented that it was important to undertake open ended surveys to allow responders to be honest and that involvement of the community when developing questions should be considered.

In response to questions, Councillor Maria Kirkland, Cabinet Member for Third Sector Engagement and Development advised that she was considering different ways of engaging with the community as part of her portfolio and considering how innovative methods of engagement could be utilised to target minority groups.

The Committee agreed to receive a report in approximately nine months on developments in community engagement, including an update on the work carried out by the Infusion Service.

10 PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT SCRUTINY REVIEW ACTION PLAN

The Committee discussed the action plan of the Pupil Referral Unit Scrutiny Review Panel and considered progress made against the recommendations. In response to questioning, Mrs Curtis, Director of People advised that Recommendations One, Two and Three had been actioned and had been identified as 'ongoing' because they were not one off actions.

Members agreed that Recommendations One, Two and Three be signed off subject to a final report to be provided on the work of the Blackpool Challenge Board on progress made on the recommendations. It was agreed that Mrs Curtis would liaise with the independent chairman of the Blackpool Challenge Board to provide the report.

With regards to Recommendation Four, Mrs Curtis advised that the submission of the bid to the Department for Education Transformation Fund was expected to be made in July 2016. A further update would be provided to the Committee on the recommendation following the outcome of the bid later in 2016.

The Committee agreed:

1. To receive a final report on Recommendations One, Two and Three from the Blackpool Challenge Board at a future meeting.
2. To receive an update on Recommendation Four following the outcome of the funding bid.

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted the date and time of the next meeting as Thursday 12 July 2016, commencing at 6pm in Committee Room A.

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Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8.00 pm)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:

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